

SEMICONDUCTOR MEMORY DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention:

The invention relates to an electrically writable non-volatile semiconductor memory device, particularly to a circuit for generating a drain voltage to be applied to a specific memory cell during read operation.

This application is a counterpart of Japanese patent application, Serial Number 291116/2002, filed October 3, 2002, the subject matter of which is incorporated herein by reference.

2. Description of Related Art:

There are following related related arts.

JP 2000-11668A

JP 1994-215585A

JP 1994-342598A

Fig. 2 is a circuit configuration showing an example of a conventional semiconductor memory device.

This semiconductor memory device is an electrically writable non-volatile memory, and has a plurality of memory arrays MA_k ($k=0$ to p). Each of the memory array MA_k has the same configuration, and has a plurality of word lines WLi ($i=0$ to m), which are arranged in parallel with one another, and a plurality of drain lines DLj ($j=0$ to n) which are arranged to intersect the word lines WLi , wherein a plurality of source lines SLj are arranged in parallel with one another between the drain lines DLj and $DLj+1$.

Memory cells $MCE_{i,j}$ are arranged at the point of intersection between the word lines WLi , drain lines DLj , and source lines SLj , and memory cells $MCO_{i,j}$ are arranged at the point of intersection between the word lines WLi , drain line DL_{j+1} , and source lines SLj . Numerical subscripts such as i, j and so forth are omitted in the following description except in the case where constituting components are specified concretely.

The memory cells MCE, MCO are a field-effect transistor (hereinafter referred to as FET) having a floating gate, wherein a control gate, a drain and a

source of the FET are respectively connected to the corresponding word lines WL and drain lines DL, and source lines SL .

In the case where an electric charge is absent on each floating gate of the memory cells MCE, MCO, a threshold voltage of the FET is lowered so that the FET turns ON (e.g., memory content "1"), while in the case where the electric charge is present, the threshold voltage of the FET is increased so that the FET turns OFF (e.g., memory content "0"). Since the floating gate is isolated from other electrodes, if a high voltage is applied to the word lines WL to accumulate the electric charge, the memory content is stored even upon power-down.

Each of the drain lines DL_j are connected to the drain voltage MCD via an n-channel MOS transistor (hereinafter referred to as NMOS). An even numbered selection signal SEV is supplied to each gate of NMOS_{1j} of even numbered and an odd numbered selection signal SOD is supplied to each gate of the NMOS_{1j} of odd numbered, wherein they are subjected to on-off control.

Further, the source lines SL_j are connected to bit lines BL_j via an NMOS_{2j} which are in common subjected to on-off control in response to a memory array selection signal MAS . The source lines SL_j of the memory arrays MA are connected to the bit lines BL_j via the NMOS_{2j}.

Still further, the bit line BL₀ is connected to a data line DL₀ via an NMOS_{3₀}, and a bit line BL_n is connected to a data line DL₁ via an NMOS_{4_n}. Further, bit lines BL₁ to BL_{n-1} are connected in common to the data lines DL₀, DL₁ via NMOS_{3₁} to NMOS_{3_{n-1}} and NMOS_{4₁} to NMOS_{4_{n-1}}. Each of the NMOS_{3_j} and NMOS_{4_{j+1}} is subjected to on-off control in response to a bit line selection signal Y_j, respectively.

The data lines DL₀, DL₁ are connected to sense amplifiers (SA) 5₀, 5₁, and data D₀, D₁ each having a predetermined logical level are outputted from the sense amplifiers 5₀, 5₁,

The selection signal relative to the word lines WL of each memory array MA, the even numbered selection signal SEV, the odd numbered selection signal SOD, and the memory array selection signal MAS are supplied from corresponding memory array driving circuits MADRs in response to word line selection signals XP₀ to XP_m, memory array selection signal MAS₀ to MAS_p, and even and odd numbered selection signals YEV and YOD which are

outputted from an address decoder, not shown, respectively. Bit line selection signals Y relative to the NMOSs 3, 4 are supplied from the address decoder. Meanwhile, the drain voltage MCD to be applied in common to each memory array MA is generated by a drain voltage generator 10.

The drain voltage generator 10 generates the drain voltage MCD (e.g., 1.2V) which is sufficiently lower than a power supply voltage VCC (e.g., 3V) for read operation of each memory array MA when the semiconductor memory device is rendered in an active state in response to a chip selection signal /CE ("/" is inverting symbol).

The drain voltage generator 10 has a p-channel MOS transistor (hereinafter referred to as PMOS)11 and an NMOS12 which are controlled in conductive state by the chip selection signal /CE. A source of the PMOS11 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC, and a drain thereof is connected to a node N1. A drain of the NMOS12 is connected to the node N1 and a source thereof is connected to the ground voltage GND.

Further, a drain of an NMOS13 is connected to the node N1, and a source and a gate thereof are connected to the ground voltage GND and a node N2. A source of an NMOS14 is connected to the node N2, and a gate of the NMOS14 is connected to the node N1. A drain of the NMOS14 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC via a PMOS15 a gate of which is connected to the ground voltage GND. The drain voltage MCD is outputted from the node N2.

An operation of the conventional semiconductor memory device is described next.

With the semiconductor memory device having the foregoing configuration, in the case where read operation is effected relative to the memory cell, the chip selection signal /CE goes "L", thereby setting an active state. Accordingly, the PMOS11 and NMOS12 turn ON and OFF, respectively, and the voltage of the node N1 goes "H". When the voltage of the node N1 goes "H", the NMOS14 turns ON, and the node N2 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC via the NMOS14 and the PMOS15, thereby increasing the voltage of the node N2. The voltage of the node N2 is fed back to the gate of the NMOS13, so that the NMOS13 turns ON.

As a result, a voltage obtained by dividing the power supply voltage

VCC by the PMOS11 and the NMOS13 is outputted to the node N1. The voltage of the node N1 is further applied to the gate of the NMOS14. With such a feedback loop, the drain voltage MCD outputted from the node N2 becomes about 1.2 V which is sufficiently lower than the power supply voltage VCC. Accordingly, there is no fear that data is erroneously written in the memory cell during read operation, so that the memory content is not changed but held in the memory cell.

Meanwhile, in the case where no read operation is effected relative to the semiconductor memory device, the chip selection signal /CE goes "H", thereby setting a standby state. Accordingly, the PMOS11 and the NMOS12 of the drain voltage generator 10 turn OFF and ON, respectively, and the voltage of the node N1 becomes the ground voltage GND. When the voltage of the node N1 becomes the ground voltage GND, the NMOS14 turns OFF to set the node N2 in an open state. As a result, the drain voltage MCD is not outputted but substantially goes the ground voltage GND owing to leakage resistance and so forth. Accordingly, a drain current does not flow to each memory array MA, thereby reducing a current consumption in the standby state.

However, the conventional semiconductor memory device has following problems.

If the number of memory arrays and bit lines increase as a memory capacity increases, the entire length of wires through which the drain voltage MCD is supplied lengthens, thereby increasing a load caused by a parasitic capacitance of the wires and the like. Accordingly, if a standby state is switched to an active state in response to the chip selection signal /CE, the rising of the drain voltage MCD to be applied to each memory array MA delays, causing a problem that a normal read operation is not effected.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention has resolved the problems of the conventional semiconductor memory device and it is an object of the invention to provide a semiconductor memory device having an MCD generator in which access delay does not occur when switching from a standby state to an active state.

To achieve the above object, the semiconductor memory device of the

first aspect of the invention is made up of an electrically writable non-volatile semiconductor memory device and comprising a voltage generator for generating a drain voltage to be applied to a read-out subject memory cell during read operation, wherein the voltage generator is made up of first generating means for generating the drain voltage with a predetermined driving performance when an operation enable signal is supplied thereto, and second generating means for generating the drain voltage with a driving performance which is lower than the predetermined driving performance irrespective of the presence or absence of the operation enable signal.

Since the semiconductor memory device of the first aspect of the invention has configured as set forth above, the following operation is effected.

In the voltage generator, the drain voltage is generated by the second generating means with a driving performance which is lower than the predetermined driving performance irrespective of the presence of the operation enable signal and it is applied to the memory cell. When the read operation enable signal is supplied to the first generating means, the drain voltage is generated by the first generating means with the predetermined driving performance, and it is applied to a read-out subject memory cell. As a result, the drain voltage is always held at the predetermined voltage, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access.

The second aspect of the invention is configured such that the voltage generator temporarily sets a drain voltage at a value higher than a predetermined voltage when an operation enable signal is supplied thereto.

The third aspect of the invention is configured such that the voltage generator is made up of voltage generating means for generating the drain voltage having a predetermined value by feed backing an output voltage to an input side based on an operation enable signal, and feedback stop means for temporarily stopping the feedback of the output voltage to increase the drain voltage when the operation enable signal is supplied thereto.

According to the second or third aspect of the invention, the drain voltage generated in the voltage generator is temporarily higher than the predetermined voltage when the operation enable signal is supplied to the voltage generator. Accordingly, the drain voltage to be applied to the memory

cell is quickly increased to eliminate the occurrence of delays in access.

The fourth aspect of the invention is configured such that a semiconductor memory device is made up of an electrically writable non-volatile semiconductor memory device and comprises a voltage generator for generating a drain voltage to be applied to a read-out subject memory cell during read operation, the drain voltage being applied to a plurality of memory arrays, wherein the memory array has switching means for subjecting the drain voltage to be applied from the voltage generator to on-off control in response to a selection signal.

According to the fourth aspect of the invention, the following operation is effected.

The drain voltage generated in the voltage generator when the read operation enable signal is supplied thereto, and the thus generated drain voltage is applied to each memory array. In each memory array, switching means is subjected to on-off control in response to the selected signal, and the drain voltage is applied only to the selected memory array.

The fifth aspect of the invention is configured such that a semiconductor memory device is made up of an electrically writable non-volatile semiconductor memory device and comprises a voltage generator made up of a plurality of memory arrays for generating a drain voltage to be applied to a read-out subject memory cell during read operation, wherein the voltage generator is provided for every plurality of memory arrays, and when the memory array is selected, a voltage generator corresponding to the selected memory array generates the drain voltage and applies the drain voltage to the selected memory array.

According to the fifth aspect of the invention, the following operation is effected.

The drain voltage is generated by the voltage generator which is provided corresponding to the selected memory array during read operation, and it is applied to the selected memory array.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a circuit configuration of a semiconductor memory device

according to a first embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is circuit configuration showing one example of a conventional semiconductor memory device;

Fig. 3 is a circuit diagram of a drain voltage generator according to a second embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 4 shows signal waveforms showing the operation of the drain voltage generator in Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a circuit diagram of a drain voltage generator according to a third embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 6 shows signal waveforms showing the operation of the drain voltage generator in Fig. 5;

Fig. 7 is a circuit diagram of a memory array according to a fourth embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 8 is a circuit diagram of a memory array according to a fifth embodiment of the invention; and

Fig. 9 is a circuit diagram of a memory array according to a sixth embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

First Embodiment:

Fig. 1 shows a semiconductor memory device according to a first preferred embodiment of the present invention.

The semiconductor memory device has a drain voltage generator 10A which differs from the drain voltage generator 10 shown in Fig. 2.

This semiconductor memory device is a non-volatile semiconductor memory capable of an electrical writing. The semiconductor memory also has a plurality of memory cell arrays MA_k ($k=0$ to p) for storing data therein. Each memory array MA_k has the same configuration, and, for example, as shown in a memory array MA_0 , it has a plurality of word lines WLi ($i=0$ to m), which are arranged in parallel with one another, and a plurality of drain lines DLj ($j=0$ to n) which are arranged to intersect the word lines WLi . Further, a plurality of source lines SLj are arranged in parallel with one another between each of the drain lines DLj and $DLj+1$.

Memory cells $MCE_{i,j}$ at the even numbered side are connected to the word lines WL_i , drain lines DL_j , and source lines SL_j , and memory cells $MCO_{i,j}$ at the odd numbered side are connected to the word lines WL_i , drain lines DL_{j+1} , and source lines SL_j .

The memory cells MCE , MCO are FET each of which has a floating gate. A control gate, a drain and a source thereof are respectively connected to the corresponding word line WL and drain line DL , and source line SL .

In the case where an electric charge is absent on the floating gate of each of the memory cells MCE , MCO , a threshold voltage of the FET is lowered so that the FET turns ON (e.g., memory content "1"), while in the case where the electric charge is present, the threshold voltage of the FET is increased so that the FET turns OFF (e.g., memory content "0"). Since the floating gate is isolated from other electrodes, if a high voltage is applied to the word lines WL to accumulate the electric charge, the memory content is stored even upon power-down.

Each of the drain lines DL_j is connected to the drain voltage MCD via an $NMOS1_j$. An even numbered selection signal SEV is supplied to a gate of an even numbered $NMOS1_j$, and an odd numbered selection signal SOD is supplied to a gate of an odd numbered $NMOS1_j$ wherein they are subjected to on-off control.

Further, the source lines SL_j are connected to bit lines BL_j via $NMOS2_j$ which are in common subjected to on-off control by a memory array selection signal MAS . The source lines SL_j of each of the memory arrays MA are connected to the bit lines BL_j via the $NMOS2_j$.

Still further, a bit line BL_0 is connected to a data line DL_0 via an $NMOS3_0$, and a bit line BL_n is connected to a data line DL_1 via an $NMOS4_n$. Further, the bit lines BL_j to BL_{n-1} are connected in common to the drain lines DL_0 , DL_1 via $NMOS3_1$ to $NMOS3_{n-1}$ and n $NMOS4_1$ to $NMOS4_{n-1}$. $NMOS3_j$ and $NMOS4_{j+1}$ are subjected to on-off control in response to a bit line selection signal Y_j , respectively.

The drain lines DL_0 , DL_1 are connected to sense amplifiers 5_0 , 5_1 , and data D_0 , D_1 each having a predetermined logical level are outputted from the sense amplifiers 5_0 , 5_1 ,

The selection signal relative to the word lines WL of each memory array MA, the even numbered selection signal SEV, the odd numbered selection signal SOD, and the memory array selection signal MAS are supplied from corresponding memory array driving circuits MADRs in response to word line selection signals XP0 to XPm, memory array selection signal MAS0 to MASp, and even and odd numbered selection signals YEY and YOD which are outputted from an address decoder, not shown, respectively. A bit line selection signal Y relative to the NMOSs 3, 4 is supplied from the address decoder.

Meanwhile, the drain voltage MCD is applied in common from the drain voltage generator 10A to each memory array MA. The drain voltage generator 10A generates the drain voltage MCD (e.g., 1.2V) which is sufficiently lower than the power supply voltage VCC (e.g., 3V) for read operation of each memory array MA when the semiconductor memory device is rendered in an active state in response to a chip selection signal /CE.

The drain voltage generator 10A has a PMOS transistor 11 and an NMOS12 which are controlled in conductive state by the chip selection signal /CE. A source of the PMOS11 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC, and a drain thereof is connected to a node N1. A drain of the NMOS12 is connected to the node N1 and a source thereof is connected to the ground voltage GND.

Further, a drain of an NMOS13 is connected to the node N1, and a source and a gate thereof are connected to the ground voltage GND and a node N2. A source of an NMOS14 is connected to the node N2, and a gate thereof is connected to the node N1. A drain of the NMOS14 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC via a PMOS15 a gate of which is connected to the ground voltage GND.

Still further, a drain and a source of an NMOS16 are connected to the drain and source of the NMOS14, and a gate of the NMOS16 is connected to each drain of the PMOS17 and the NMOS18. A gate and a source of a PMOS17 are connected to the ground voltage GND and power supply voltage VCC, respectively, and a gate and a source of an NMOS18 are connected to the node N2 and the ground voltage GND, respectively. The drain voltage MCD is outputted from the node N2.

Each on resistance of the PMOS17 and the NMOS18 is set to be sufficiently larger than that of the PMOS11 and the NMOS12 .

An operation of the semiconductor memory device according to the first embodiment is described next.

With the semiconductor memory device having the foregoing configuration, in the case where read operation is not effected relative to the memory cell MC, the chip selection signal /CE goes "H" to set at a standby state. Accordingly, the PMOS11 and the NMOS12 turn ON and OFF, respectively, and the voltage of the node N1 becomes the ground voltage GND. When the voltage of the node N1 becomes the ground voltage GND, the NMOS14 turns OFF.

Meanwhile, since the PMOS15, 17 always turn ON, a voltage of a node N3 goes "H" so that the NMOS16 turns ON. As a result, the node N2 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC via the NMOS16, PMOS15 which turn ON, respectively, so that the voltage of the node N2 is increased. The voltage of the node N2 is applied to each gate of the NMOSs 13, 18 so that the NMOSs 13, 18 turn ON.

As a result, a voltage obtained by dividing the power supply voltage VCC by the PMOS17 and the NMOS18 is outputted to the node N3. The voltage of the node N3 is applied to the gate of the NMOS16. With such a feedback loop, the drain voltage MCD outputted from the node N2 is held at about 1.2 V which is sufficiently lower than the power supply voltage VCC. At this time, although a shoot-through current flows from the power supply voltage VCC to the ground voltage GND via the PMOS17 and the NMOS18 which turn ON, respectively, the shoot-through current has a very small value since each on resistance of the the PMOS17 and NMOS18 is set at a very large value.

In the case where the chip selection signal /CE is set at "L" to be rendered in active state so as to effect read operation relative to the memory cell, the PMOS11 and the NMOS12 turn ON and OFF, respectively. Meanwhile, the NMOS13 keeps ON so that the power supply voltage VCC is divided by the PMOS11 and the NMOS13 and the divided voltage is outputted to the node N1. The voltage of the node N1 is further applied to the gate of the NMOS 14. The drain voltage MCD outputted from the node N2 owing to such a feedback loop is

held at about 1.2V which is sufficiently lower than the power supply voltage VCC in the same manner as the standby state.

The drain voltage MCD generated by the drain voltage generator 10A is applied to each memory array MA, and further applied to a drain of the memory cells MC at the even numbered side or odd numbered side via the drain lines DL of a memory array MA_k selected in response to a memory array selection signal MASK. Further, an ON/OFF state of the memory cells MC connected to the word line WL selected in response to the selection signal, of the selected memory array MA_k, is outputted to each bit line BL via each source line SL.

Each bit line BL is further selected by the bit line selection signal Y, and the state of each bit line BL is outputted to the data lines DL0, DL1, then it is converted into a predetermined logical level by the sense amplifiers 5₀, 5₁ and outputted as data D0, D1.

As mentioned above, since the semiconductor memory device of the first embodiment generates the drain voltage MCD even in the standby state which is substantially the same as that in the active state, it has the drain voltage generator 10A to which a feedback circuit made up of the NMOSs16, 18 and PMOS17 is added. Further, the PMOS17 and the NMOS18 use a large on resistance, thereby restraining the increase of the shoot-through current. As a result, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access when switching from the standby state to the active state without substantially increasing current consumption.

Second Embodiment:

Fig. 3 is a circuit diagram of a drain voltage generator according to a second embodiment of the invention. A drain voltage generator 10B is provided in place of the drain voltage generator 10 shown in Fig. 2, and the common components which are common to those in Fig. 2 are depicted by common reference numerals.

The drain voltage generator 10B provides an NMOS19, a PMOS20, and a pulse generator 21 in the drain voltage generator 10 in Fig. 2. A source of the NMOS19 is connected to a node N1, and a drain thereof is connected to the power supply voltage VCC via the PMOS20. The pulse generator 21

generates a pulse signal PLS, which goes "H" for a definite period of time, at the falling of a chip selection signal /CE, and the pulse signal PLS is supplied to a gate of the NMOS19. A gate of the PMOS20 is connected to the ground voltage GND. Other configurations of the components are the same as those of the drain voltage generator 10 shown in Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 shows signal waveforms showing the operation of the drain voltage generator in Fig. 3. The operation of the drain voltage generator in Fig. 3 is now described with reference to Fig. 4.

At a standby state, the chip selection signal /CE is "H", and the pulse signal PLS outputted from the pulse generator 21 is "L". Accordingly, a PMOS11 and the NMOS19 turn OFF, but an NMOS12 turns ON. As a result, a signal Sn1 of the node N1 goes "L" and the NMOS14 turns OFF. The drain voltage MCD outputted from the node N2 becomes the ground voltage GND at a near end (ne) and a far end (fe).

When the chip selection signal /CE falls accompanied by the start of read operation, the PMOS11 and the NMOS12 turn ON and OFF, respectively, so that the signal Sn1 of the node N1 goes "H". When the signal Sn1 of the node N1 goes "H", the NMOS14 turns ON so that the node N2 is connected to the power supply voltage VCC via the NMOS14 and the PMOS15 to increase the voltage of the node N2. The voltage of the node N2 is fed back to the gate of the NMOS13 so that the NMOS13 turns ON. As a result, a voltage obtained by dividing the power supply voltage VCC by the PMOS11 and NMOS13 is outputted to the node N1. The voltage of the node N1 is further applied to the gate of the NMOS14.

At the same time, the pulse signal PLS which is outputted from the pulse generator 21 for a definite period of time from the falling of the chip selection signal /CE goes "H". Accordingly, the NMOS19 turns ON so that the signal Sn1 of the node N2 is pulled up toward the power supply voltage VCC side and is increased up to a voltage of $VCC - V_t$ (where V_t is a threshold voltage of the transistor) at the maximum. Accordingly, a drain voltage MCDne at the near end is increased up to $VCC - 2V_t$ at the maximum. On the other hand, a drain voltage MCDfe at the far end is increased behind the drain voltage MCDne.

The pulse signal PLS returns to "L" upon elapse of a definite period of

time from the falling of the chip selection signal /CE, so that the NMOS19 turns OFF. Accordingly, there does not occur the increase of the voltage of the signal Sn1 caused by the NMOS19, but the voltage remains kept as it is since the drain voltage MCD is increased up to a fixed voltage.

As mentioned above, the semiconductor memory device according to the second embodiment comprises the pulse generator 21 for generating the pulse signal PLS for a definite period of time when the standby state is changed to the active state, and the NMOS19 for pulling up the drain voltage MCD up to the power supply voltage VCC side in response to the pulse signal PLS. Accordingly, the drain voltage MCD quickly rises when switching from the standby state to the active state, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access.

Third Embodiment:

Fig. 5 is a circuit diagram of a drain voltage generator according to a third embodiment of the invention. A drain voltage generator 10C is provided in place of the drain voltage generator 10 shown in Fig. 2, and the components which are common to those in Fig. 2 are depicted by common reference numerals.

The drain voltage generator 10C has NMOSs 22, 23 which are serially connected to each other instead of the NMOS13 of the drain voltage generator 10 in Fig. 2, and also a pulse generator 21 for controlling the NMOS23, and an inverter 24. A drain and a gate of the NMOS22 are connected to nodes N1, N2.

Further, the pulse generator 21 generates a pulse signal PLS which goes "H" for a definite period of time at the falling of a chip selection signal /CE, and the pulse signal PLS is inverted by the inverter 24, and the thus inverted pulse signal is supplied to a gate of the NMOS23 as a pulse signal /PLS. Other configurations of the components are the same as those shown in Fig. 2.

Fig. 6 shows signal waveforms showing the operation of the drain voltage generator in Fig. 5. The operation of the drain voltage generator in Fig. 5 is now described with reference to Fig. 6.

In a standby state, the chip selection signal /CE and the pulse signal /PLS are "H", respectively. Accordingly, the PMOS11 turns OFF, the NMOS12, 23 turn ON, and the drain voltage MCD becomes the ground voltage GND.

When the chip selection signal /CE falls accompanied by the start of read operation, the PMOS11 and the NMOS12 turn ON and OFF respectively, and at the same time, the pulse signal /PLS goes "L" for a definite period of time from the falling of the chip selection signal /CE. Accordingly, the NMOS23 turns OFF so that the feedback operation by the NMOS22 is stopped, and the signal Sn1 of the node N1 is increased up to the power supply voltage VCC. As a result, the drain voltage MCD outputted to the node N2 becomes to a voltage of $VCC - V_t$.

Upon elapse of a definite period of time from the falling of the chip selection signal /CE, the pulse signal /PLS returns to "H" so that the NMOS23 turns ON. Accordingly, the drain voltage generator 10C becomes a circuit which is the same as the drain voltage generator 10 in Fig. 2, wherein a feedback operation is started by the NMOS22, and the drain voltage MCD is changed from the voltage of $VCC - V_t$ to a predetermined voltage.

As mentioned above, the semiconductor memory device according to the third embodiment comprises the pulse generator 21 for generating the pulse signal /PLS for a definite period of time, and the NMOS23 for separating the node N1 from the ground voltage GND to pull up the drain voltage MCD up to the power supply voltage VCC side in response to the pulse signal /PLS. Accordingly, the drain voltage MCD quickly rises when switching from the standby state to the active state, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access.

Fourth Embodiment:

Fig. 7 is a circuit diagram of a memory array according to a fourth embodiment of the invention. A memory array MAA_k (k=0 to p) is provided in place of each memory array MA0 to MAp in Fig. 2, and components which are common to those in Fig. 2 are depicted by common reference numerals.

The memory array MAA_k is configured to apply a drain voltage MCD generated by a drain voltage generator 10 to drain lines DL0 to DL_n via NMOSs 31_k, 32_k for switching purpose.

The NMOSs 31_k, 32_k are connected in parallel to each other, and the drain voltage MCD is applied to each input side of the NMOSs 31_k, 32_k, and they are subjected to on-off control in response to an even numbered selection signal

SEV_k and an odd numbered selection signal SOD_k. Each output side of the NMOSs 31_k, 32_k is connected to the drain lines DL₀ to DL_n via NMOS 1₀ to NMOS 1_n. Other configurations of the components are the same as those shown in Fig. 2.

With the semiconductor memory device having such a memory array MAA, the NMOSs 31_k, 32_k of the selected memory array MM_k turn ON, and all the NMOSs 31_j, 32_j of the non-selected memory array MMA_j ($j \neq k$) turn OFF. Accordingly, the parasitic capacitance of the load of the drain voltage generator 10 is reduced so that the drain voltage MCD rises normally when switching from the standby state to the active state.

As mentioned above, according to the semiconductor memory device of the fourth aspect of the invention, each memory array MAA has the NMOS 31, 32 for switching purpose so as to receive the drain voltage MCD. Accordingly, the non-selected memory array MAA is separated from the load side of the drain voltage generator 10, so that the parasitic capacitance of the load of the drain voltage generator 10A can be reduced. As a result, the drain voltage MCD rises normally when switching from the standby state to the active state, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access.

Fifth Embodiment:

Fig. 8 is a circuit diagram of a memory array according to a fifth embodiment of the invention. A memory array MAB_k ($k=0$ to p) is provided in place of the memory arrays MA₀ to MA_p in Fig. 2.

According to the memory array MAB_k of the fourth embodiment, an NMOS 33_k is provided in place of the NMOSs 31_k, 32_k for switching purpose of the memory array MAA_k in Fig. 7, and the NMOS 33_k for switching purpose is subjected to on-off control in response to a memory array selection signal MASK. Other configurations of the components are the same as those shown in Fig. 7.

Since the memory array MAB_k has small number of NMOSs for switching purpose compared with the memory array MAA_k in Fig. 7, there is an advantage that a circuit scale can be reduced in addition to the advantage of the fourth embodiment of the invention.

Sixth Embodiment:

Fig. 9 is a circuit diagram of a memory array according to a sixth

embodiment of the invention. A memory array MA Ck ($k=0$ to p) is provided with adedicated drain voltage generators 10Ek, and it is provided in place of the memory array MA0 to MAP in Fig. 2. By the provision of the drain voltage generator 10Ek, the drain voltage generator 10 is deleted.

The circuit configuration of the memory cell of the memory array MACk is the same as that of the memory array MA0 to MAP in Fig. 2.

Meanwhile, each drain voltage generator 10Ek has a non-disjunction gate (NAND) 25 in addition to the drain voltage generator 10 in Fig. 2. That is, a chip selection signal CE and the memory array selection signal MASK relative to the memory array MACk are NORed, which serves as a chip selection signal /CE forcontrolling the drain voltage generator 10.

As a result, only the drain voltage generator 10Ek of the selected memory array MACk operates, and a drain voltage MCDk generated by the drain voltage generator 10Ek is applied to the memory array MACk.

As mentioned above, according to the sixth embodiment, each memory array MACk has the dedicated drain voltage generator 10Ek. As a result, it is possible to generate the appropriate drain voltage MCD without being influenced by the entire storage capacity by dividing the semiconductor memory device into memory arrays each having appropriate storage capacity, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access.

The invention is not limited to the first to sixth embodiments set forth above, but can be modified variously. There are, for example, the following modifications.

(a) The configurations of the drain voltage generators 10A to 10D are not limited to those as illustrated. The drain voltage generator is sufficient to be configured to generate a appropriate drain voltage MCD not to effect an erroneous writing during read operation.

(b) Although the drain voltage generator in Fig. 1 has a plurality of memory arrays MA, the invention can be applied to a semiconductor memory device which is configured by one memory array.

(c) The memory array MA shown in Fig. 1, Figs. 7 to 9 are configured by separating the memory cells MCE at the even numbered side and the memory cells MCO at the odd numbered side. The invention is not limited

to such a configuration.

As described in detail, according to the first aspect of the invention, the drain voltage generator has the second generating means for generating the drain voltage with a driving performance which is smaller than a predetermined driving performance irrespective of the presence of the operation enable signal. As a result, the drain voltage is always held at a predetermined voltage, thereby obtaining an advantage of eliminating the occurrence of delays in access.

According to the second and third aspects of the invention, the drain voltage generator is configured to temporarily generate the drain voltage which is higher than a predetermined voltage when the operation enable signal is supplied thereto. As a result, it is possible to prevent the quick increase of the drain voltage to be applied to the memory cell when starting read operation, thereby obtaining an advantage of restraining the occurrence of delays in access.

According to the fourth aspect of the invention, a plurality of memory arrays constituting the drain voltage generator have switching means for subjecting the drain voltage generated by the voltage generator to an on-off control. Accordingly, the drain voltage is applied only to the selected memory array so that a predetermined drain voltage is held, so that there is no likelihood of the occurrence of delays in access.

According to the fifth aspect of the invention, the plurality of memory arrays constituting the semiconductor memory device have the dedicated drain voltage generators. Accordingly, the drain voltage is generated by the drain voltage generator provided corresponding to the memory array which is selected during read operation, and it is applied to the selected memory array. Accordingly, it is possible to eliminate the occurrence of delays in access without being influenced by the entire storage capacity by dividing the semiconductor memory device into a plurality of memory arrays.